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ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of an Australian survey investigating the issues raised by unemployment in society, using extensive quotations from the respondents. In 1983 an open-ended questionnaire was sent to a group of about 10,000 young people (aged 18-22) in Australia to determine their opinions about unemployment and the future and to reflect their experiences in the labor market. About 1,250 surveys were returned; of these about one-third of the respondents were unemployed or had been unemployed. Part 1 outlines the social and industrial circumstances of 1983, using the comments of a wide range of young people to indicate the attitudes of the community on unemployment, the reasons these attitudes are so deeply rooted in the society, the effects of current technological and industrial changes on the patterns of employment, and why some young people are affected by social change. In Part 2, young people describe their experiences in looking for work and comment on employers and their practices. The effects of unemployment on young people are shown in Part 3, indicating that unemployment means not simply inadequate income but also a deprivation of place and purpose in society. In Part 4, young people give their views on what should be done about youth unemployment and who should do it. Part 5 looks at the question of whether concerns about employment and unemployment expressed by young people in 1983 are still relevant in the early 1990s, and what policies and programs have been or could be implemented to improve the situation of young people in a changing society. Each chapter incorporates an overview of what the available research says about the issue in question. A list of 108 references and an appendix describing the longitudinal youth study are included. (KC)